

JUNE 21, 1978

SOLAR ENERGY FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

INTRO :

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOLAR ENERGY IN CAIRO HAS CLOSED WITH A CALL FOR URGENT ACTION TO TAP THE ENERGY OF THE SUN. VOA SCIENCE EDITOR LASZLO DOSA FILED THIS REPORT FROM THE EGYPTIAN CAPITAL.

VOICE:

"DO IT NOW, GET THE PROJECTS STARTED," THIS CALL FOR ACTION WAS THE GENERAL THEME OF THE CAIRO MEETING, SPONSORED BY THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AND SUPPORTED BY SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

MOST OF THE SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS CAME FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, RANGING FROM BRAZIL TO THAILAND, AS WELL AS A HEAVY REPRESENTATION FROM THE ARAB WORLD. THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS WERE ALSO WELL REPRESENTED. IN ADDITION TO A LARGE DELEGATION FROM AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS, AND FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, MANY EXPERTS CAME TO CAIRO FROM FRANCE, ITALY, SWEDEN AND WEST GERMANY.

IN THE PRACTICALLY UNANIMOUS VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS, THE SYMPOSIUM WAS MOST USEFUL IN GIVING THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES, LEARN FROM EACH OTHER, AND TO LAY THE BASIS FOR EXTENDED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR ENERGY. AND IT WAS A TWO-WAY EXCHANGE. ENGINEERS FROM THE INDUSTRIAL WORLD HAVE LEARNED JUST AS MUCH FROM THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

SOLAR ENERGY HAS MANY POTENTIAL USES AND APPLICATIONS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD, RANGING FROM PUMPING WATER FROM DEEP

UNDERGROUND RESERVOIRS TO THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL CROPS BY DRYING THEM. HEATING AND COOLING OF HOUSES, TREATING OF SEWAGE, IRRIGATING FARMLAND, PURIFYING WATER, ARE JUST A FEW OF THE WAYS SOLAR ENERGY IS ALREADY BEING USED IN MANY PARTS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

DELEGATES FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES TOLD VOA OF MANY EXAMPLES OF SOLAR POWER APPLICATION. IN JORDAN, EMERGENCY TELEPHONES LOCATED ALONG THE COUNTRY'S MAIN HIGHWAY ARE POWERED BY SUNSHINE. IN CHILE, SCIENTISTS ARE WORKING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM TO PROPEL SHIPS BY SOLAR ENERGY. IN EGYPT, PLANS ARE BEING MADE TO TURN SOME OF THE DESERT INTO ARABLE LAND BY SUN-POWERED IRRIGATION SYSTEMS.

SPEAKER AFTER SPEAKER AT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE STRESSED THE NEED FOR SIMPLE DEVICES, FOR THE USE OF LOCAL MATERIALS AND LOCAL LABOR IN THE BUILDING OF SOLAR ENERGY INSTALLATIONS. THE CONFERENCE HAS CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL FUND TO SUBSIDIZE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON A LOCAL BASIS. AND, AS A FIRST STEP, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAVE REQUESTED THAT ALREADY EXISTING TECHNICAL LITERATURE ON SOLAR ENERGY UTILIZATION BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM IMMEDIATELY.

RK/RCS